

The background of the entire page is a solid orange color. Overlaid on this background are several large, stylized, light-orange leaf-like shapes. These shapes are layered and curved, creating a sense of movement and depth. They are positioned primarily in the upper half of the image, with some extending towards the bottom left.

**PUT**

**RECOVERY**

**FIRST**





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## **Introduction**

Our country is stuck. In a fair society, we should have what we need to get ahead: a place to call home, access to efficient public services, an excellent education, and enough money in our pockets. But that's far from the reality for too many people in our country today.

The Covid-19 pandemic has been tough on all of us, and we have much to do. We understand how you feel: frustration, exhaustion, loss, disappointment, anxiety, relief, hope.

Like you, we want to focus on the things that are most important to you and your family after a tough year. To do that, we first have to get Wales back on its feet.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats have a bold, ambitious plan for communities everywhere in Wales. A plan that moves Wales forward to a new normal where we all have the opportunity to thrive. The Welsh Liberal Democrats will put recovery first.

### **Recovery for our Economy – help our high streets, town and city centres, and support small businesses to thrive and adapt.**

In the face of both Covid-19 and Brexit we will support businesses, town and city centres and high streets across Wales so local people and our businesses can recover and thrive. We will make funding available to invest in digital connectivity, bring buildings back into use, to invest in infrastructure, and create accessible and welcoming places to visit that support jobs, businesses, and workers.

### **Recovery for our Planet – create a package of investment of £1bn per year to fight the climate emergency.**

The pandemic has been difficult for us all and it feels like all other big issues have been set aside - but the clock is ticking on the future of our planet. We'll do everything in our power to protect our planet for future generations and in doing so we'll stimulate our economic recovery.



## **A Caring Recovery – provide 24/7 crisis mental health care.**

Our Covid-19 response asked us all to make sacrifices and for many of us our mental health and wellbeing has suffered. We'll create a more caring Wales by standing up for our carers and investing in keeping people well. We will build a caring society and improve the lives of millions, helping people to recover from the trauma of the last year.

Our priorities are your priorities. The Welsh Liberal Democrats will be relentless in making sure that after a tough year, we can look forward to the future with hope.

We will put the recovery of our economy, our health and wellbeing, and our planet first.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jane Dodds". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Jane Dodds**

**Leader of the Welsh Liberal Democrats**



A

**CARING**

**RECOVERY**

## A Caring Recovery

We owe a huge debt to our health and care workforces, and the many unpaid carers in our communities. Covid-19 has shown just how essential our NHS is, but also the challenges it faces. A Caring Recovery means valuing staff, carers, and the many volunteers keeping people connected.

A more caring Wales is one where people have seamless access to the services they need, when they need them, and where they need them. Where Staff have the resources, the recognition and support to give each of us the tools to live healthily and independently for as long as possible.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats believe in care that meets our individual needs throughout our lives: parity between physical and mental health; where your postcode doesn't determine how healthy you are or how long you live; a truly compassionate, properly funded, and inclusive care system.

As we leave the worst effects of the pandemic behind, we have an opportunity to build a more caring Wales.

### **We will:**

- 1. Create a step-change in our approach to mental health, increasing the share of funding to 13% of all NHS spend by 2028.**
- 2. Agree with workforces and patients a range of NHS and social care recovery plans to ensure that people who have had their care delayed or impacted are supported as quickly as possible.**
- 3. Ensure that all care workers are paid fairly by equalising pay and conditions across the NHS and social care and ensuring that all care workers are paid the Real Living Wage.**

## Responding to Covid-19

Overnight our health and care system transformed services in response to Covid-19. For many that has meant changes to ongoing care and delayed operations and treatment, resulting in uncertainty. There will be no return to normal, and we must plan to meet the ongoing challenges of Covid-19 and ensure that those waiting for care get the treatment they need as quickly as possible.

Across Wales, we will be bearing the scars and trauma of Covid-19 - and the response cannot just be limited to professional mental health services. Instead, we need to create a trauma-informed society where all aspects of our society are more caring. This gear-shift in our society will help prevent mental health from worsening and developing into crisis.

The pandemic has shed light on the need to improve access to bereavement support. We must plan to meet the ongoing challenges to ensure those who need support can access it as quickly as possible.

Lower income families have experienced significant strain and financial hardships during the pandemic. The provision of relationship counselling could make all the difference in supporting families to recover from the last year.

**We will:**

- Agree with workforces and patients a range of NHS and social care recovery plans to ensure that people who have had their care delayed or impacted are supported as quickly as possible, including specific approaches for conditions and illnesses such as cancer.
- Plan to provide free counselling to couples and provide a platform for a more resilient future for families.
- Develop a plan to improve access to a wide range of counselling and therapies for those experiencing complex grief.

**The right care, at the right time, in the right place**

Early intervention and diagnosis can be life-saving, but with long waiting times for initial appointments, and even longer delays for referrals and specialist services, too many people are not getting the care they need at the right time.

Local provision of care must be at the heart of our health system. From improving access to GPs through better funding, recruitment, and technology, to better supporting community pharmacies to deliver a greater range of services, we will deliver a system that prioritises the local provision of care.

We will enable services across the NHS and the care system to work together better through community health cooperatives and by introducing single patient health records and e-prescribing.

Technology has a significant role to play in keeping people healthy for longer. It can improve access to medical services, and help people to monitor their health at home. Welsh Liberal Democrats will continue to develop telemedicine and remote consultations, including for abortion advice and the Welsh Gender Service.

We will work with patients to ensure equity of access to ensure that nobody is excluded by lack of access to technology or poor digital literacy. We will also invest in improving 'back office' systems to improve patient experiences.

## **A right to healthcare**

We will introduce a Right to Rehabilitation that ensures everyone has access to rehabilitation services as a matter of course, including access to community-based services and technologies. This will ensure that more people can live independently and in better health for longer.

We will use our devolved health service to protect the rights of people to access services without judgement and fear. We will do everything in our power to ensure our services are not sharing data in relation to deportation action, so that refugees and others feel safe to approach health services.

We will legislate in Wales to guarantee access by young people to services that previous generations have fought for. We will protect the assumption of Gillick competence, that allows young people to access health services without the permission of parents, particularly around abortion and gender reassignment.

The fight against HIV has progressed in recent years. New diagnoses are down and the development of PrEP has meant that we have more tools in our arsenal than ever before. But we must do more to deliver on Wales' commitment to end new cases of HIV in Wales. Welsh Liberal Democrats will set out a routemap to end new transmissions of HIV by 2030, establish Fast Track City networks, and tackle stigma and discrimination.

## **Mental health and wellbeing**

One in four people will suffer from poor mental health in their lifetime. There is still so much stigma around mental health and all too often people are dismissed when they raise concerns. The trauma that many of us have faced throughout the pandemic could have a lasting impact, increasing demand on already stretched services.

We will take a holistic approach to the social factors and root causes of poor mental health and wellbeing, connecting people to a range of professional and community-led support services.

We will create a step-change in our approach to mental health, increasing the share of funding to 13% of health spending by 2028, delivering:

- A 24/7 mental health crisis care system
- Improved access and choice in psychological therapies
- Reducing waiting times for services

Long term investment in services that can help prevent the need for crisis care and promote better well being and reduce spending in other areas in the long-term.

Young people in particular face difficulties. In addition to an increased focus in schools on health and wellbeing, we will provide an active offer of advocacy to support young people to get the care they need.

**We will:**

- Ensure Ministerial responsibility for Mental Health, ensuring collaboration and partnership working across government.
- Set targets to end the need for Out of Area placements that see children sent far from home, their family, and friends.

## **Social Care**

Covid-19 has shown just how important our social care sector is, but for years it has been underfunded and underappreciated. Our social care system should provide individuals with support and equal access for all, regardless of their background and regardless of ability to pay.

There is an urgent need to reform adult social care if it is going to meet our needs for the future. We must put our social care system on a more sustainable footing. We will explore the implementation of the recommendations of the Holtham Commission and work with professionals to introduce reforms that move us towards the creation of a single National Care Service for Wales.

We will implement wide-ranging changes to commissioning, streamlining service delivery and giving more power to commissioners, and to people themselves to source their own services to find the care that best meets their needs. In the short term we will continue to drive the joint commissioning of services by Local Health Boards and local authorities.

Despite the incredible work of the care workforce, social care remains a relatively 'low paid' sector; fewer than half of the workforce in Wales are paid the Real Living Wage, and care home workers have faced a decade of no relative improvement in pay. We will ensure that all care workers are paid fairly by equalising pay and conditions across the NHS and social care and ensuring that all care workers are paid the Real Living Wage.

We must do more to recognise and value the contribution of unpaid carers. We will raise awareness about the contribution they make, as well as ensure access to information, advice and support on legal rights, and increase the support available to carers at a local level. At a UK level we'll campaign for a meaningful increase of the Carer's Allowance, and in Wales we will introduce a duty on the NHS to identify carers and to promote their health and wellbeing.

**We will:**

- Equalise pay and conditions across the social care sector, ensuring that all care workers are paid the Real Living Wage.
- Streamline social care services and practices, working towards the creation of a single National Care Service and the integration of health and care in Wales.
- Implement wide-ranging changes to commissioning, giving more power to local commissioners, and to people themselves to source their own services.

**Supporting healthcare staff**

Our health workforce does an incredibly difficult job. The last year has been traumatic for many. We will provide meaningful mental health and occupational health support to all staff in the NHS, extending the 24/7 support line to more staff, not just those in clinical roles.

In the last year, the effect of Covid-19 has significantly impacted all sections of the workforce. There is evidence that workplace counselling can halve sickness absence by increasing employee resilience and wellbeing. We must ensure that staff have access to the support they need.

The contribution of our student health workers cannot go unrecognised. We will incorporate resilience based learning for all NHS roles which take a trauma informed approach.

We will roll out single occupational health records to ensure that when staff move between jobs, teams, or services they face no barriers to accessing support where and when they need it.

Recognising the skilled work of those across the nursing profession we will work with unions to deliver a meaningful pay increase to make sure nursing pays, helping to retain talent and aid recruitment.

**Staffing levels**

In 2015 Welsh Liberal Democrats led the campaign to introduce a requirement for safe staffing levels of nurses on adult acute wards. When our wards are properly staffed, nurses are better able to deliver safe and effective care, reducing the need for readmission.

We will extend the Nurse Staffing Levels Act to cover mental health inpatient, children's wards, and community ward settings, as well as explore the possibility for similar measures in other parts of our health system.



## **Staff learning and progression**

We will work with leaders to develop a culture throughout the NHS that is inclusive, and encourages staff learning and progression. By protecting time for staff to keep learning the NHS can continue to deliver the best care possible. We will also introduce Freedom to Speak Up Guardians, ensuring accountability at all levels.

We will work with the sector to develop new pathways into healthcare and nursing through apprenticeships and explore other creative opportunities to train the next generation of professionals.

## **Public Health**

It is better for everyone if we keep people healthy in the first place, rather than waiting until people need treatment. This means a focus on prevention and early intervention and improving public health through promoting healthy living.

We also know that who you are, where you're born, your income, the quality of your housing and other factors determine your health.

For example, we know that air quality can be significantly worse in more deprived communities. Air pollution is the most significant environmental threat to public health, second only to smoking. At a cost £1bn per year to our NHS, air pollution is draining our resources, straining our health system and cutting short over 2000 lives a year in Wales.

### **We will:**

- Pass a Clean Air Act in the first 100 days to tackle dirty air and the poor health outcomes it causes.
- Ensure that Health Impact Assessments are embedded in planning decisions and wider decision making
- Ensure the continuation of health and public health research, including collaboration with international networks of research excellence.
- Invest and support developments in technology to enable people to access health technologies in Welsh.
- Establish a taskforce to look at addressing health inequalities in Wales.



**RECOVERY  
IN**

**EDUCATION**

## Recovery in Education

A good education unlocks opportunities and empowers people to reach their potential. Our education system has faced enormous challenges through this pandemic, but it also offers us a chance to recover and build a fairer society.

After the last year much needs to be done to make sure that young people can thrive, that people can access training opportunities, and that our economy, our NHS, our arts and culture sectors can benefit from the world-leading research of our universities.

We will continue the work of Welsh Lib Dem Education Minister, Kirsty Williams, to give our children the best start in life and support adults to engage in learning and skills development through a right to lifelong learning.

### We will:

- 1. Provide free school meals throughout the school holidays and significantly invest in programmes to tackle hunger, isolation, and exclusion during the school holidays.**
- 2. Embed a right to lifelong learning: expanded Personal Learning Accounts will ensure that everyone, no matter their background, age or location in Wales, can benefit from free, flexible and accessible courses to gain new skills and qualifications.**
- 3. End digital exclusion at all levels of education, supporting the development of strong digital skills and access to digital resources.**

## A Fair Start in Life

We want to see an education system which helps young people to grow in wellbeing, confidence, and motivation, allowing them to make the most of their education, and their whole lives.

Welsh Liberal Democrats have led the way on investing in early years education because that is where it makes the most difference. In Government, Kirsty Williams has continued to invest in the Pupil Development Grant (PDG), more than doubling funding for our youngest pupils and established PDG Access to further support families that need it more. However, more needs to be done.

**We will:**

- Continue targeted financial investment to support our learners: we plan to extend provision of Free School Meals during the school holidays beyond the pandemic and to invest in programmes which tackle holiday hunger, isolation, and exclusion.
- Continue funding to give our poorest pupils the same opportunities as their peers, from helping to cover the cost of school uniforms and sports kits, to supporting trips and IT equipment.
- Monitor and take action to create more inclusive school environments to ensure that all children can engage with their learning and receive appropriate support.

**A 21st century education**

In Government, the Welsh Liberal Democrats led the new, first ever made-in-Wales curriculum that puts teachers' expertise at its heart, giving them the freedom to be creative, and supporting learners to become confident, capable and compassionate citizens.

The new curriculum will support children to be compassionate citizens who understand and listen to different perspectives. A new focus on health and wellbeing, the development of digital literacy, and inclusive teaching on race and relationships and sexuality will ensure that our children are ready to be confident citizens in a changing world.

We are proud that in Government, Kirsty Williams introduced the new International Learning Exchange programme ensuring that learners in Wales do not miss out on valuable opportunities to experience education abroad and learn alongside visiting students from other countries. This is an essential part of a modern and outward looking education system based on the principles of reciprocity and the value of collaboration.

It is essential that our schools have access to the best facilities and resources. Since 2016 we have seen significant investment in our school buildings and infrastructure. Under Kirsty Williams' leadership, 100% of schools now have access to full fibre broadband, compared to just 37% in 2016. The creation of the Hwb platform provides free access to Microsoft Office and learning materials which has boosted digital skills and supported learning outside the classroom.

Now is the time to revisit some fundamental aspects of school organisation. We propose to assess how schools are currently funded and arrangements for school term dates.

The next Senedd has a chance to take the next steps in reforming qualifications and continue our efforts to make our education system truly fair and inclusive. It is essential that we don't lose the pace and the excitement about our new curriculum and our national mission of education reform, and continue to work towards an education system fit for the future.

**We will:**

- Work with local authorities to review school funding via an expert review panel.
- Work with the education workforce, unions, and others to consider if school term dates could be reformed, maintaining the same amount of school 'holiday' days for staff and learners.
- Work with the profession, employers, and young people to reform our qualifications framework.
- Provide the support necessary to make implementation of the new curriculum a success.
- Deliver a whole school approach to mental health, as set out in the new curriculum, and roll out trauma-informed practice in all schools so that staff are able to act as first responders.
- End digital exclusion at all levels of education, supporting the development of strong digital skills.

## **A community approach to learning**

Education is at the heart of many communities: it provides young people with wider social networks, but it also connects parents who socialise at the school gates, and enhance community life by providing sports and recreational facilities for community groups.

Schools have demonstrated their central role in providing support for their learners, families and wider communities. Since 2016, Kirsty Williams has invested over £15 million to support the concept behind 'community focused schools'. Community focused schools are essential in helping to support the wellbeing and raise standards of all learners, but particularly learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We will continue to invest capital funding to support community focused schools and will also ensure that all schools have Community Engagement Officers.

When stay-at-home restrictions forced children to learn from home, people across the country stepped up to Keep Wales Learning. Parents, relations, family friends and volunteers from the wider community helped

children with their education, introducing them to new opportunities and helping them to stay engaged. However, these opportunities were not equally available to all children.

We must do all we can to Keep Wales Learning after the pandemic and give children and young people the best start possible in life. We need to work harder than ever to engage businesses, the third sector, and further and higher education to maximise opportunities to enrich learning in response to Covid-19.

## **Building for Success**

Properly supported staff, effective funding and strong leadership and management form the foundations for a successful education system. Under Kirsty Williams' leadership we established the National Academy for Educational Leadership to support current and aspiring school leaders with the opportunity and skills to lead.

Educational staff work with inspiring dedication, and they have risen to the challenges of a pandemic. We must continue the programme of reform we began in 2016 to give our educators a chance to implement an education system that is a source of national pride.

### **We will:**

- Continue to support access to training and development, including through the National Academy for Educational Leadership.
- Ensure that the whole workforce has access to mental health support, alongside reducing workload and pressure on the system.

## **Life-long learning**

The new Curriculum for Wales will transform our education system and lay strong foundations for learners to develop their skills for the challenges ahead of them. However, too many people are still held back from reaching their full potential. Further and Higher Education provides people with opportunities.

Learning should be an opportunity throughout life. Whether for the joy of learning and sense of community, to develop skills or retrain for a new career, or to have another chance at qualifications to build confidence and unlock new pathways.

Thanks to the work of the Welsh Liberal Democrats in government we are on our way to a genuine right to life-long learning. We must continue to work to make that a reality for everyone in Wales.

**We will:**

- Embed a right to lifelong learning: expanded Personal Learning Accounts will ensure that everyone, no matter their background, age or location can benefit from free, flexible and accessible courses to gain new skills and qualifications.
- Work with the Further Education sector, employers, and key stakeholders to develop a vision for post-16 education that works in the best interest of learners and staff, providing flexible and valid qualifications.

**Colleges and Universities**

Our universities and colleges are an immensely valuable asset. Their expertise, insight, and networks provide opportunity to support so many aspects of our lives, and in particular our economic recovery from Covid-19. Strong international collaboration enriches our education system, research, and communities and is an important part of our education system and every aspect of our lives.

Working with our colleges, we will help to develop support for businesses and industry to recover from the pandemic through employer hubs and digital community hubs. We need to strengthen collaboration and support innovation, especially for small and medium sized enterprises that form the backbone of our economy. This is why we intend to build closer links between colleges and business through Business Wales; we also plan to create a Centre for Vocational Education and Training

We believe Higher Education should be available to all on the basis of ability. Welsh Liberal Democrat reforms to higher education funding have made university degrees in Wales more accessible to many. We are particularly proud that students on part-time courses receive equivalent funding, and that all Welsh students are now financially supported to pursue postgraduate degrees.

We can do even more to give people access to our colleges and universities. We will drive collaboration across the further and higher education sectors through a new Tertiary Education and Research Commission for Wales, providing oversight, strategic direction and leadership for the whole post-16 sector.

Alongside research and innovation, learners' experience will be at the centre of reforms enabling greater cohesion across the sector, promoting learner pathways and supporting transitions in further education. We will further enhance the opportunities for meaningful partnership between learners and institutions though autonomous, funded, and independent Students' Unions across Wales.



**We will:**

- Continue to support students through focusing support on living costs, working to close the gaps between social security and student finance, and prioritising a student mental health strategy.
- Campaign for UK-wide participation in Horizon 2020 to provide opportunities for staff and students across Wales and beyond.
- Expand degree apprenticeships, including at postgraduate level, diversifying the subject areas available, and creating more routes into employment.
- Improve links with business and support businesses to innovate, grow and diversify.
- Support research by implementing the recommendations of the Reid review and work with the UK Government to ensure that Wales has direction over the Shared Prosperity Fund to ensure that research funding is included.
- Build upon the work to date to recapture and progress the civic mission of higher education in light of the pandemic.

**Welsh Language Education**

Welsh medium education is the best tool at our disposal to reach the target of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. Whilst progress has been made in recent years we must do more.

Our Welsh Language for All Act would bring together existing plans and approaches and enshrine new targets, not only to increase the number of children attending Welsh medium education, but also to drive investment in childcare and early years provision, as well as strategic workforce planning and funding.

We will review and revise travel regulations and guidance to facilitate access to Welsh-medium childcare, statutory education and post-16 education for all learners.

**We will:**

- Invest and plan to expand the proportion of the workforce who can teach through the medium of Welsh, backed by an additional £100m over 10 years, led by local authorities and education consortia; this would also include people who provide childcare.
- Ensure sufficient capital funding for local authority plans to expand Welsh medium provision, as set out through Welsh in Education Strategic Plans.
- Invest in the growth of Cylch Meithrin and Cylch Ti a Fi in new locations to increase takeup of Welsh medium childcare.

A man and a woman are shown in a workshop or laboratory setting. The woman, with blonde hair in a braid, is pointing towards a complex arrangement of wires and electronic components. The man, with grey hair, is looking on with a focused expression. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**RECOVERY  
FOR OUR**

**ECONOMY**

## **A Recovery for our Economy**

Our economy must support secure, well-paid work and good public services. We recognise that work is no longer a guaranteed route out of poverty and will redouble efforts to tackle poverty and deprivation in Wales.

Wales remains the part of the UK with the lowest incomes and some of the worst incidences of poverty. A report by the Joseph Rowntree foundation found that before the Covid pandemic, 700,000 people - almost a quarter of the population - were living in poverty. The twin crises of Brexit and Covid have caused further damage to our already fragile economy.

For too long, plans for growth have ignored the structural problems in our economy. Wales has a huge number of micro-businesses, and a small number of branch operations from inward investors which many jobs rely on. Wales needs to promote the growth of the stable, medium-sized companies to provide a strong backbone for our economy.

But it does not need to be like this. Liberal Democrats will put recovery first.

In doing so, we want to see a Welsh economy that balances the fundamental needs of people with the limited resources of our planet.

### **We will:**

- 1. Create a £500m fund to help our high streets, town and city centres, and support small businesses across Wales thrive and adapt.**
- 2. Introduce a package of measures to boost incomes, create jobs - especially green jobs, and tackle poverty.**
- 3. Work to remove the barriers that businesses in Wales now face to trading with European markets.**

## **Recovery for Businesses**

Wales is a nation of towns and villages: we want thriving town and village centres and welcoming cities - places where people want to come to for more than shopping - to be the key to a sustainable economic revival.

Between Covid-19, Brexit and long-standing structural issues, businesses face an uncertain future. We recognise how essential our small businesses, entrepreneurs, the self-employed and micro-businesses are for Wales and our future.

We will unleash the potential of businesses by creating a more supportive environment for businesses to thrive, providing long-term certainty, investing in infrastructure and technology, skills and training, and working with business leaders to carve a brighter future for businesses in Wales.

If we are to recover from the pandemic we must listen to what businesses and communities need to get back on their feet and thrive. Our £500m investment in our high streets, town and city centres will allow local councils, business leaders, and business organisations to work together to identify priorities for investment the length and breadth of Wales.

**We will:**

- Freeze business rates for the life of the next Senedd and in the long-term, replace business rates with a fairer, more supportive system.
- Introduce a Business Rate Investment Relief Fund - supporting businesses to invest, and targeting productivity and decarbonisation measures.
- Reform rules to accelerate change of use applications for commercial premises and introduce a Community Right to Buy to bring empty shops in town centres, high streets, and city centres back into use.
- Invest in broadband and mobile phone connectivity to enable businesses to better compete online, including providing training and support to enable businesses transition to a new 'virtual high street'.
- Establish a Job Creation Premium, offsetting the initial costs of recruitment and training for businesses looking to grow. This fund will explicitly include support for businesses that wish to invest in disabled employees.
- Develop a long-term plan to support businesses and enable small businesses to grow, including establishing an Economic Recovery Council, grounded in real experience and voices of small businesses across Wales.
- Pass an Economic Development Bill, creating and re-shaping the infrastructure and support businesses need to thrive, promoting high-value enterprise and employment.
- Pass a People's Procurement Act, requiring local authorities to commission small local businesses and supply chains as a priority, whilst making other rules more flexible giving greater scope to invest in longer-term contracts.

## **Supporting family and household budgets**

We believe that society should guarantee a basic standard of living, a safety net for its citizens, and opportunity for everyone to aim high and reach their potential. Ensuring that people have greater financial stability and freedom will be a key part of our recovery.

A vicious cycle of low pay, inadequate childcare and rising housing costs has afflicted Wales. In half of those households in poverty at least one person is in work; it is simplistic to suggest that employment alone is a route out of poverty.

Our economy has been disproportionately affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. At its peak, more than a third of jobs in Wales were furloughed. Radical action is needed to help those worst affected by the pandemic to recover, and to help everyone thrive in the long-term.

Unsecured and unaffordable personal debt is a growing issue in Wales. Falling pay and benefits, along with soaring living costs, has forced thousands of people into problem and subprime debt just to afford a basic standard of living. Where debts are unpaid, people face being locked out of services and support, facing more debt to meet living costs.

Poverty is overwhelmingly in-work poverty, and in an age of falling real pay, longer hours and rising living costs, work no longer provides the prospect of a route out of poverty that it once did. Liberal Democrats are committed to trialling a Universal Basic Income (UBI). We believe - based on the growing body of evidence from trials around the world - that UBI not only reduces inequalities and increases wellbeing, but that it strengthens local economies.

And to ensure that work does pay, we commit to making Wales a Real Living Wage and Living Hours nation, with our public sector setting a lead.

### **We will:**

- Provide free part-time childcare from 9 months to date of the child's third birthday for all parents, regardless of work status and work towards providing free part-time early learning and care to all 3-4 year, with additional hours available on a sliding scale, for 48 weeks a years
- Work with the UK Government to pilot a nation-wide Universal Basic Income, alongside reform to create a coherent 'Welsh Benefits System', bringing together existing funds and devolved benefits. We will seek further devolution of the benefits system to bring Wales into line with Scotland.

- Make available a specific and limited pot of funding so that we could eradicate debt that has already been sold on to debt collection agencies, of up to 200,000 of the poorest people over the Senedd term, at a fraction of the cost.

## **Green Economy**

Green investment provides a huge opportunity to create new, long-term jobs, stimulate sustainable economic growth and re-energise communities. At the heart of our proposals is a large-scale investment programme in renewable energy and environmental protection measures, aiming to decarbonise the economy and create new, high-quality and sustainable employment.

We will commit to climate mitigation measures including new green homes and the retrofitting of existing homes as we move towards a zero-carbon society. We will lead and encourage this work, although the investment will largely come from the private sector. We will ensure that the public sector uses its purchasing and spending power to promote a green agenda.

### **We will:**

- Create a package of investment of £1bn per year to fight the climate emergency, creating new jobs, stability for supply chains and businesses, and investing in new technology.
- Pass an Economic Development Bill, providing long term stability to grow supply chains and strengthen the economy
- Invest in high-quality apprenticeships and training, deepening the connections between our colleges and universities to support research, innovation, and address skills shortages for 'new' jobs and technologies.

## **Rural Economy**

The pandemic has hit our rural communities hard. For those heavily reliant on tourism and the hospitality sector, the last year has been tough.

The last year has brought into sharp focus the significant challenges in our rural economy. From poor digital and transport connectivity, housing costs, the threat Brexit poses to our agriculture and farming sectors, and the challenges of running small businesses, rural Wales faces a difficult period ahead.

Farming in particular is facing huge change. Change is necessary, both to protect the long-term future of food production in Wales and to protect

our environment and tackle climate change. How it is done though, will affect the livelihoods of thousands of farmers and the viability of many rural communities. We must go green, not go broke.

For many years, average net farm income in Wales has been below the level of subsidy. 59% of farms made a significant loss in some or all of the last three years. Post-Brexit, Welsh livestock farmers may not lose their main market in the EU and face financial ruin, but they may find the regulatory barriers to trade difficult and expensive. They are not guaranteed continued financial support from the Government.

**We will:**

- Invest in tackling broadband and mobile phone connectivity challenges in rural Wales, including creating employment hubs to enable remote working.
- Ensure any future funding scheme for farming provides not a penny less for farming and agriculture.
- Invest in affordable and social housing supply in rural communities, including tackling second homes and holiday lets.

## **Wales and the World**

Our departure from the EU has fundamentally changed how Wales interacts with the rest of the world. It is clear that Brexit will seriously damage the Welsh economy, from our ability to trade with the world to the damage to our ports.

This damage is not down to “teething problems”; it is inherent in the model of Brexit - including the departure from the Single Market and the Customs Union - that the Conservatives have chosen to pursue.

**We will:**

- Work towards re-joining the Single Market and Customs Union, as part of the scheduled renegotiation with the EU in 2025, or earlier should the opportunity arise;
- Establish and reaffirm a Welsh brand, working to sell Wales, our exports and opportunities to invest in Wales around the world.

## **A fairer economy**

Who you are, where you live, your employment, your education, your health and wellbeing, your ethnicity all determine your economic stability and freedom. We have to ensure that everyone can take part in and benefit from our recovery.



**We will:**

- Embed principles of fair work within all organisations, including encouraging employers to advertise all jobs as available for flexible working, to improve working culture and to reduce pay gaps.
- Increase diversity at all levels and in all sectors by encouraging employers to tackle bias in recruitment, promotion and pay and introducing a new national target for senior and executive management positions
- Address under-representation in apprenticeships. This should include setting, and meeting, targets for disabled people and people from black, asian and ethnic minority backgrounds.
- Introduce universal free part-time childcare from 9 months to school age, expand provision of before and after school care and introduce universal part-time holiday care for 5-13 year olds
- Ensure that any use of insecure employment contracts adequately protects the rights of workers.
- Remove financial legal costs of challenging workplace racism in employment tribunals and ensure representation amongst tribunal committees.
- Ensure that procurement of government and public sector contracts involve a Race Equality Impact Assessment of tenders as well as training to inform assessments
- Transform existing approaches to diversity training across the public sector and work with leaders in industry to provide leadership and role models.

**We will commission research and a review into whether employers fulfil equality duties, particularly on access to senior-level posts and responses to workplace racism.**



**RECOVERY  
FOR OUR  
PLANET**

## A Recovery for our Planet

Our planet is in crisis, or, as Greta Thunberg puts it: "our house is on fire". From the flooding across our communities to pollution, climate and ecological breakdown are affecting us all. We must act now.

The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have been difficult for us all and it feels like all other big issues have been stopped in motion - but the clock is ticking on the future of our planet.

We will put the environment at the heart of rebuilding our economy, creating a fairer, more resilient economy that works for people and the planet. We will ensure that our long-term economic approach is one that is regenerative by design, based on the principles of a circular economy and a 'do no harm' principle.

A Welsh Liberal Democrat government will put the climate and our planet at the heart of its agenda: we want to ensure a thriving environment for future generations.

### We will:

- 1. Create a package of investment of £1bn per year to fight the climate emergency, create new jobs and stability for supply chains and businesses, and to invest in new technology.**
- 2. Pass a Green Homes Act to help cut average household energy bills by £500 per year and build smarter more, energy efficient homes.**
- 3. Take action to protect our natural environment and biodiversity, including action on flooding, reforestation, wildlife conservation, marine conservation and loss of open, public green space.**

## Energy

Wales is a nation of opportunity: our natural environment provides us with rich resources for a greener, more sustainable economy which would allow both our communities and the whole planet to thrive.

We could easily meet our own energy needs and become a net exporter of energy, too. In the process, we can create and support companies and many more skilled jobs. This will be supported by our plans for skills and education opportunities, providing the skilled workforce needed.

## **We will help communities across Wales thrive as part of our green recovery by:**

- Making Holyhead a regional hub for renewable energy and hydrogen production, creating new, long-term jobs and opportunities for local businesses.
- Making Port Talbot the principal manufacturing and port hub for floating offshore wind in Wales, to lead the manufacturing and assembly of floating offshore technology.
- Rolling-out electrical vehicle charging and electric heat pump technology in Mid-Wales, alongside additional onshore wind capacity built to take advantage of significant untapped wind resource in Mid-Wales, utilising the Natural Resources Wales (NRW) estate to secure a return for Welsh taxpayers.

Our coastline provides a fantastic opportunity for Wales to become a global leader in tidal renewable energy. We will continue to work with the UK Government to deliver tidal energy projects in Wales.

We must ensure that the electricity grid is ready to meet Wales' energy aspirations. There are significant challenges with the grid that must be overcome if we are going to transition to a carbon neutral energy system.

### **We will:**

- Campaign for regulatory reform by the UK government to promote grid investment.
- Pursue the devolution of the Crown Estate to support rapid deployment of more marine renewable energy.
- Invest in the infrastructure required to increase the capacity for renewable energy production. This would include the implementation of a grid system upgrade, informed by the National Infrastructure Commission tasked with carrying out a strategic review.

## **Farming and agriculture**

Welsh Liberal Democrats have always been passionate supporters of farming, in balancing the aim to protect our land and natural environment to safeguarding our food security, and sustaining flourishing rural communities.

For many, agriculture is a way of life, a culture and a community - so much more than just a means of making a living. For generations, the people of

rural Wales have farmed and lived off the land, bred generations of award winning livestock, and fed the nation from our fields.

But farm incomes are fragile and the twin challenges of Brexit and Covid-19 create devastating uncertainty. Farmers wishing to modernise and diversify often find themselves facing planning obstacles, which can unfairly delay their business plans and reduce the cost-effectiveness.

We will ensure that farmers get a fair deal, support new entrants, and encourage investment, growth, and innovation. We will work to ensure that all farm support is structured to make farming more competitive and resilient, acknowledging the role of farmers as custodians of land and of our natural environment.

Farming faces great challenges. Change is necessary, both to secure the long-term future of food production in Wales and to protect our environment. How it is done will affect the livelihoods of thousands of farmers and the viability of many rural communities not just today but for the generations to come.

Above all else, we must strive to safeguard food security, whilst protecting our environment and ensuring that traditional rural life can still be enjoyed by future generations.

**We will:**

- Ensure that the Basic Payments Scheme is replaced by a system based on public money for public goods, including: sustainable land management for biodiversity gain and for improvements in water quality and pollution levels.
- Ensure that transition from the Basic Payments Scheme to the Sustainable Farming Scheme leaves no farmer without financial support during the process.
- Increase resources for Natural Resource Wales to enable investigation and prosecution of incidents of pollution, supporting targeted interventions based on the polluter pays principle
- Work with the UK Government to ensure that it only enters into trade agreements under which imported goods meet the high environmental, food quality and animal welfare standards expected of home-produced food.

## **Nature and Biodiversity**

In the last year, we have all come to appreciate the spaces and places around us, and many of us have found the natural environment around us wanting. We believe that access to nature is more than just about the

critical task of protecting our planet and our wildlife, and cleaning up the air we breathe, but it's good for our health and wellbeing too.

Biodiversity loss in Wales has been dramatic with most mammals, farmland birds, invertebrates, and flower-rich unimproved grasslands having suffered drastic declines.

We need our land and our water to recover, supported by initiatives across government. There are no second chances. We must ensure that where targets are set, they are met.

Moving financial support to a 'public money for public good' basis, with payments for gains in biodiversity and other ecosystem services such as flood prevention and carbon retention, is essential.

**We will:**

- Declare a Nature and Biodiversity crisis, setting out the cross-government and societal actions needed to leave a thriving planet for future generations.
- Agree Nature and Marine Recovery Plans, to clean up our environment and our waters, protect species, and ensure that our environment can thrive.
- Introduce legally binding nature recovery targets with regular milestones, backed up by monitoring and reporting

Nature plays an essential role in providing food, energy, medicines and genetic resources. Environmental pressures are accelerating biodiversity decline, and the rate of species extinctions is accelerating: our natural environment is deteriorating.

We will introduce measures to reduce and re-use waste, make our communities and cities greener, support sustainable farming practices, improve the health of our marine environment, and drive changes in our economy.

Trees and hedges support vital habitats, support farm animals and help to restore soils and to capture carbon. They are crucial to protect our farms and communities from increasing adverse weather conditions. We support plans for a National Forest for Wales.

**We will:**

- Make every town in Wales a Tree Town, with every council preparing a long term Tree and Woodland Strategy to deliver and sustain a minimum of 20% tree cover in urban areas and 30% tree cover for all new developments.
- Update and improve tree protection legislation as part of our plans for a new Welsh Planning Act.
- Increase tree cover on farms with payments under a Hedges and Edges Scheme, supporting climate-smart, nature-friendly farming.

Although many of us live and work on the coast, the condition of our marine areas and the health of our marine wildlife is deteriorating. Wales has missed opportunities to take action and time is running out.

We will publish Nature and Marine Recovery Plans, reporting on agreed, ambitious targets to clean up our environment and our waters, protect species, and ensure that marine ecosystems can thrive. These plans will drive the necessary funding, planning, training, and regulation or legislation needed in the short, medium, and long term.

We must also address the gap that our departure from the European Union will leave in environmental policy and governance. Where we were once part of a pan-European network driving critical change in environmental policy, we risk being left behind. We will work with partners to identify the necessary resources for the Welsh Government and local authorities to deliver on our aspirations for our planet, and will look to establish a new independent body that will hold the Welsh Government to account and ensure compliance with policy and practice.

**Animal welfare**

Wales produces food to some of the world's highest standards for animal welfare, food quality and environmental protection. These standards should have been included in the Agriculture Bill currently going through the UK Parliament, and their omission may lead to cheap imports of sub-standard food. The Liberal Democrats worked to prevent these changes: instead of eroding rules for food production, we want standards to be even higher.

Wales is also a nation of animal lovers: over half of households include at least one pet. Despite progress in recent years, there is much to be done to ensure the highest standards and protections for animals in Wales.



**We will:**

- Ensure that animal welfare standards are as least as good if not better than those we enjoyed as members of the European Union
- Pass a Wildlife Act for Wales, creating clarity and consistency on the policy and legislation that protects wildlife.
- Work with the sector to improve the welfare of farm animals, including live exports, and wider issues such as public sector food procurement and labelling.
- Regulate all animal sales to protect the welfare of any pet traded, bought or sold in Wales.
- Issue guidance to local authorities ensuring they do not use their powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 in a way that compromises animal welfare.
- Work with Police and Crime Commissioners to take action against growing instances of dog thefts.

# RECOVERY FOR OUR COMMUNITIES



## **A Recovery for our Communities**

Communities and places have come to mean something different to many of us in the last year. We've changed the way we get about, changed the way we access services, and bought locally. People turned to each other for help, and we all stepped up to lend a hand to a neighbour and our communities.

The pandemic also highlighted how many people experience loneliness and isolation day in and day out, from poor transport links, poor broadband and mobile phone coverage, and a lack of essential local services.

We know how important communities are to each of us, not just as places to live or work, but places where people can thrive and feel like they belong.

We will adopt the principles of a 20-minute neighbourhood in all planning and decision making. This means that essential services are available within a 20 minute journey by walking, cycling, or public transport. This includes shopping areas, health facilities, schools, green spaces and playgrounds, and employment opportunities.

By passing a Community Empowerment Act we will give power back to communities to design how communities look and feel, the services and facilities available, give residents a stronger voice, and support community organisations.

### **We will:**

- 1. Make sure public transport works for everyone, including free transport for young people up to 25 and investing in active travel.**
- 2. End homelessness through a mixture of house building, funding for services, and new legislation to ensure nobody goes without the help they need to escape homelessness.**
- 3. Ensure that in the next five years at least 90% of homes and businesses in Wales have access to full fibre broadband.**

## **Fixing our broken housing system**

Throughout the pandemic, we have seen the disadvantages suffered by those who are in inadequate housing, are facing homelessness, or have to choose between heating and eating. The pressure of high bills, low income, furlough or lay-offs has brought people and families to the edge. Our

housing system is under serious strain and has been for years, but it doesn't have to be this way.

We can and will end homelessness. We can and will take a stand to ensure young people can have affordable homes. We can and will commit to building new homes to ensure that everyone's basic need for a place to call home is met.

**We will:**

- Build 30,000 new social homes for rent, ensuring that people on low incomes or with experience of homelessness can access a safe and secure home.
- Invest record sums in retrofitting housing to be accessible, greener, and more energy efficient
- Continue the Rent to Own scheme that has helped people to own their own home for the first time
- Commit to ending homelessness, by adopting a wide range of policies including increasing the Housing Support Grant.

**Affordable, adequate, comfortable housing**

Everyone has the right to feel safe, warm, and able to stay in their home. Everyone has a right to a stable space to live. We will legislate to make sure that this right is enshrined in law so that it guides all our decision making.

We are also committed to delivering reforms to protect people living in high rise buildings in Wales in light of the cladding scandal. We will do so whilst protecting individuals and families from facing the unfair costs of correcting a life-threatening mistake that isn't of their making.

We will set a clear minimum standard for private rented housing, including energy standards, with a firm timescale to meet this standard. This means properties need to be accessible for people with disabilities, they need to be well-maintained, and meet the same standards as other types of housing. The initial target for wheelchair access will be 10% across tenures by the end of this Senedd term. We will legislate to ensure that private landlords are required to make their homes accessible by 2030.

We will establish a single fund for housing adaptations, so that landlords can access support to pay for necessary changes to their properties.

## **Ending homelessness**

We can end homelessness. We saw during the height of the pandemic that with resources, will and focus from public services, people were helped off the streets and into safer, stable accommodation.

Homelessness is caused by the rising cost of living, a lack of affordable housing, and a lack of support when people's needs go unmet. When such problems add up, people can be overwhelmed. We will change the way services and community partners work together so they can help people to cope long before they end up on the street. Where we can't prevent homelessness, we will ensure that people are supported into a suitable and secure home as soon as possible.

We will introduce a cross-government and cross-public services plan to achieve the systemic change needed to end homelessness in Wales.

We will invest heavily in Housing First, one of the most effective models in tackling street homelessness, wherein people are moved rapidly into housing and intense support is given to help them keep a roof over their heads. We will commit to scaling up this approach in every local authority. We will increase the Housing Support Grant by £25m over the Senedd term.

We will roll out the current "private sector leasing scheme" more widely. Under this scheme, private landlords can choose to lease their properties to councils for five years, providing housing for people on low incomes or with experience of homelessness.

We will introduce a new Housing Act to simplify the law to ensure that people aren't left out of support because of who they are, where they're from, or how they became homeless, and ensure that public services work together to prevent and end homelessness.

## **Greener homes, warmer homes**

Our ambition is to lift people out of fuel poverty, create more energy efficient, self-generating smart homes, and move towards zero carbon homes. This will create new jobs and create long-term stability within supply chains. It is a green investment for the future prosperity of our people. Our 'Homes as Power Stations' approach will go further than just saving energy.

Poor quality housing currently costs the NHS in Wales around £67m per year – money spent treating specific problems rather than preventing them in the first place.

Under our plans the average household could save over £600 a year if homes were designed to generate, store and release their own solar energy and heat pump technology.

**Our plans would create:**

- 10,000 full time equivalent jobs across Wales over 15 years
- Generate around £2.2bn for the Welsh economy
- Reduce energy consumption and energy bills for households

**Creating communities**

We need to build more homes and build more homes quickly. We will invest in building 30,000 new, energy efficient social homes as part of a wider programme of house building.

We will establish changes to planning laws that ensure community interests are protected, that we continue to meet housing demand, drawing on the principles enshrined in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

Our legislative changes to planning will also grant the Future Generations Commissioner powers to scrutinise and challenge planning decisions that go against these principles. We will continue to strengthen provisions in law to ensure that planning decisions do not have a detrimental effect on the Welsh language.

We will also change planning law so that all decisions draw on the principle of a 20-minute community. That means we can build communities that are close to leisure, recreation, employment and transport facilities.

**Rural housing**

The lack of affordable housing is a significant barrier for rural communities and for young people seeking a future in their own communities. We will ensure that the right houses are built in the right places in order to meet local needs.

People in rural communities have been priced out or left with scarce housing. We will institute legislation that requires local authorities to set council tax at the maximum possible level for all homes other than someone's primary residence. We will close loopholes that allow people to designate second homes as businesses and ensure that they pay their way to support the communities locally.

We will ensure that there are more connected, quality homes built. We will provide support for farmers to replace industrial farm buildings with small rural housing developments, helping to reignite communities and provide positive places for young people to build their futures.

## **Transport**

Welsh Liberal Democrats will make accessible, efficient, and green public transport a priority. We will ensure investment to ensure communities are connected, people can access services, and tackle emissions from public transport. We will make it easier for people to leave their car at home by investing in reliable public transport and safer cycling and walking routes.

For too long, Wales' weak digital and physical infrastructure has held our economy back, but without considering the social fabric of our communities, there is a risk that even if we attract growth, it won't reach all of our people because of poor connectivity.

Our approach to transport planning must change to reflect the impact of Covid-19 and our commitment to leaving a thriving, habitable planet for future generations. Public transport faces challenges on three fronts. First, the pre-Covid decline in people accessing public transport; second, the effects of the pandemic on our travel behaviours; third, the contribution of road transport to air pollution.

We need to modernise our transport infrastructure, by investing in greener public transport and electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

### **We will:**

- Make sure public transport works for everyone. Our Bus Bill will ensure that bus routes meet community needs, ticket fares are affordable and flexible, timetables meet different needs, and bus stops and train stations are accessible.
- By 2025, introduce free public transport for young people up to 25, as part of our plan to give the next generation the best opportunities.
- Guarantee the concessionary bus pass for the next Senedd term.
- Spend at least 10% of the transport budget on active travel, ensuring that local decision making prioritises safer and accessible walking and cycling, and provides support for people to be able to access active travel with confidence.
- Build on the success of the Burns Commission, which provided localised solutions to the challenges faced along the M4 Corridor, for other parts of Wales to identify sustainable, appropriate, and lasting transport solutions for communities.

## **Culture and Sport**

Wales has a bold and dynamic cultural life, which should serve all people in Wales. Our cultural and arts sectors make a significant contribution to our quality of life and to our economy; they give us all a chance to connect with our culture and explore our creativity.

The pandemic has been tough on our cultural institutions, with the events industry hit particularly hard. Smaller independent music venues are faced with permanent closure, larger venues predict that it will take over two years to recover financially, and local businesses are losing footfall and income.

We will support the events industry through a package of funding and guidance to unlock opportunities in order to continue a programme of events. With significant uncertainty for many businesses, we must keep Wales creative.

We will support our arts, heritage and cultural sector to recover from the pandemic, including providing fair funding for Welsh institutions and grassroots organisations from Llyfrgell Genedlaethol to small theatres.

We are endorsing UK Music's #LetTheMusicPlay campaign, to lobby the UK Government to remove VAT from all ticket sales. This will put money back in people's pockets and encourage them to support local venues and performers again.

We want Wales to be an active nation with everyone inspired and able to get active through sport, whether you want to win, stay healthy, or support your local team. The pandemic has had a huge impact on grassroots sport and leisure centres. We will support grassroots sport clubs and organisations through a Keep Wales Active Fund, designed to protect the future of grassroots clubs, and help them grow for the future.

We will work with local authorities to ensure the financial security of leisure centres and promote innovation to adapt to the circumstances of the last year.

## **Digital Connectivity**

The pandemic has emphasised how important technology is for us all in accessing services, learning and work, and staying in touch with our communities, friends, and families. Yet too many communities and individuals are left isolated without access to reliable broadband or mobile phone signals. This includes people who find it hard to access broadband due to a physical or learning disability.



Digital infrastructure is vital for businesses and central to the social and cultural infrastructure of Wales. We will ensure that all businesses have access to cutting-edge broadband and mobile connectivity, and the support to utilise technology in order to take advantage of new developments - from farming and agriculture to new food systems, transport and online trading.

**We will:**

- Make it easier and quicker to install fibre broadband connections by changing planning rules and using the latest methods to ensure quick installation with minimal disruption.
- Ensure that in the next five years at least 90% of homes and businesses in Wales will have access to full fibre broadband.
- Ensure that nobody is left behind as more services and opportunities move online, including investing in Personal Learning Accounts to allow people to up-skill and re-skill.
- invest in community-based training and support to make sure nobody is left out, with a specific requirement to prioritise disabled people and people with learning disabilities.
- Maximise the use of public assets, such as buildings and land, to drive investment in mobile phone infrastructure, with a focus on rural communities, and work with Wales-based suppliers to roll out connectivity solutions.



A

**WELSH**

RECOVERY

## A Welsh Recovery

The Welsh language is an inherent strand of the fabric of our country but still feels inaccessible to too many. Despite the progress made in recent years, there is still much to be done. Our efforts must span beyond education and consider the factors that are affecting our Welsh speaking communities, that prevent the provision of Welsh medium services, and that hold back civic and political life.

We believe in a truly bilingual nation, where everyone is able to access Welsh medium education and learning, where people can meaningfully work, start businesses, access services, access opportunities, and lead their lives using Welsh as their main language.

### **We will:**

- 1. Pass a Welsh Language Education for All Act, normalising the Welsh language in education including for life-long learning and in post-16 education.**
- 2. Support and enable the growth of rural, Welsh-speaking communities through a package of policies and funding.**
- 3. Ensure that public services and health and care services are available to all users through the medium of Welsh, by providing improved workforce planning, access to training and funding.**

## **Iaith Byw - Living Language**

Welsh speaking communities across Wales, and particularly those in our rural heartlands, are under pressure. Young people are leaving in search of opportunities, businesses struggle on seasonal trade and services are undermined by a rapid growth in holiday homes.

We will introduce a range of measures and funding to ensure that Welsh-speaking communities can thrive, building on the substantial shift in our lives as a result of the pandemic. We will give people the economic freedom to make a career and to find affordable housing close to home, which will also help ensure the growth of the Welsh language.

### **We will:**

- Establish a Rural Economy Taskforce to examine the long-term needs and future of our rural economy, including the tourism industry.
- Explore how we ensure that there are opportunities closer to home, through collaborative work spaces, stronger rights for workers to request flexible and home working, and investing in

digital connectivity.

- Introduce a framework that gives priority to local businesses and contractors to drive local investment and job creation, including opportunities for young people through a People's Procurement Act.
- Ensure that there are more affordable and social homes built in the right places, bring empty homes back into use, change the definition of affordable housing so it better meets need, tackle inconsistencies and weaknesses in legislation to address challenges with holiday homes and second homes and strengthen language considerations as part of planning legislation.
- Protect and support family farms and the farming and agricultural sector to ensure it can thrive with a sustainable funding model.

## **Broadcasting and media**

During the pandemic we saw the crucial importance of timely, accurate, and relevant broadcasting and reporting as we waited for the latest updates from the Welsh Government about Covid-19 restrictions.

Wales deserves better. We don't have the provision of news and current affairs we need, which affect the political and civic life of our country. We need more power over broadcasting, to ensure that we can meet our own needs.

### **We will:**

- Establish an ongoing central fund to support news journalism, with arms-length delivery and accountability to secure impartiality
- Continue to campaign for the devolution of powers over S4C and other public service broadcasting matters
- Work with the UK Government to ensure that Wales has an enhanced role in setting the terms of the next Channel 3 licence for Wales.

## **Public services**

The lack of provision for Welsh language speakers across public services, and particularly in the health care system, can actively hamper recovery and access to services.

When an individual comes into contact with primary healthcare, it will often be during a period of frailty when they are feeling vulnerable. Individuals living with a wide variety of health issues such as dementia or a

mental health crisis can experience severe difficulty in expressing their needs through a second language.

Whilst there are strategies in place that work towards providing bilingual services, we lack the necessary workforce planning and investment to achieve those strategies. We will miss our target for 1 million Welsh speakers if we don't change track now.

**We will:**

- Work with Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) to plan for and identify the investment, including workforce planning, needed to ensure that people can access Welsh language health care services wherever they live.
- Work with the sector and practitioners to outline how we can introduce a legal requirement to provide NHS clinical care services in Welsh when requested.
- Support the development and investment of Welsh language technology to further underpin language parity across all industries and services.





**A**

**CHILD-FRIENDLY  
RECOVERY**

## A Child Friendly Recovery

Covid-19 has shown that we can only be strong and resilient when all citizens are safe, thriving and supported. Any recovery needs to be fair for every citizen. Whilst we have a whole range of commitments that will benefit children, children in care or with experience of the care system have all too often been left behind.

We will change that. We will listen to you and give you a stronger voice and stronger rights to get the help and support you need to get ahead and thrive. Our message to you is clear: we are on your side.

### We will:

- 1. Introduce universal free part-time childcare from 9 months to school age, expand provision of before and after school care and introduce universal part-time holiday care for 5-13 year olds.**
- 2. Introduce an immediate moratorium on private for-profit contracts in specific areas of the care system, including residential children's care.**
- 3. Introduce new legislation that defines a statutory function for youth work overseen by a Minister for Children and Young People.**

## Children's Services

Our care systems - for adults and children - should be underpinned by strong and enforceable rights to ensure that people are treated with dignity and can thrive. We know that outcomes for children in care are worse than their peers, and this must change if we are going to create a Wales of opportunity.

We must listen to children and young people in care or with experience of the care system. They are voices that have been ignored. We believe they should be at the heart of decision making.

Young people are disappointed when the costs of their care become a factor in their life. By removing profit incentives we can ensure that public funds are spent on building stable, supportive and sustainable placements. We will remove the profit-making element in a care-experienced child's placement. This will be phased in to ensure placements are not disrupted.

**We will:**

- Introduce an immediate moratorium on private for-profit contracts in specific areas of the care system, including children's residential care and learning disability secure units.
- Make a national, cross-government commitment to strengthen the voices of and outcomes for care-experienced young people in shaping their care and futures.

**Children's rights and care experienced by young people**

Every child should have the opportunity to thrive and to be happy and healthy. We want to see a care system that provides all children and young people with the stability, support and tools they need to thrive. However, we know for too many children and young people the care system doesn't always provide the best start in life.

The impact of Covid-19 will hit our children hard, and in particular those who lack the right care, stability, and love children need to thrive.

We will redouble efforts to bring public services and providers together to provide support into stable independent living, paid employment, and opportunities to broaden horizons.

**We will:**

- Ensure that a child's rights approach is adopted across all public services.
- Introduce a requirement for health and education services to commission advocacy services for children and young people so all children and young people have support to access their rights
- Improve the collection and monitoring of data on attainment, additional needs and exclusions for adopted children.
- Provide carers with easy access to information and advice on trauma-informed parenting.

**Youth work**

Youth services provide a powerful opportunity to engage with, listen to, and support young people. Youth workers help young people in their personal, social and educational development, and enable them to find their voice and their place in society to reach their full potential. We must do more to ensure that youth services and youth workers are supported and have the tools to deliver the best for our young people.



**We will:**

- Define a statutory function for youth work in law overseen by a Minister for Children and Young People
- Empower youth work volunteers and staff through access to youth and community courses and incentives for voluntary organisations to support staff and volunteers to access professional and personal development
- Work with the UK Government to devolve, as part of a wider package of powers, the devolution of youth justice to Wales.

**Childcare**

Good quality childcare is fundamental to children's development and giving them the best start in life. By reforming the childcare offer, providing opportunities for early learning, opportunity to socialise and develop speech and language, and to enhance learning through play, we can close the gaps and ensure that no child is left behind.

**We will:**

- Work towards providing free part-time early learning and care to all 3-4 year olds, with additional hours available on a sliding scale, for 48 weeks a year
- Introduce free before and after school care and part time holiday care for 5-13 year olds with additional hours available on a sliding scale, for 48 weeks a year

**In the short term, we will:**

- Provide free part-time childcare from 9 months to date of the child's third birthday for all parents, regardless of work status
- Increase holiday and after school provision
- Ensure all provision is registered to help claim the cost



**A**

**RIGHTS-BASED**

**RECOVERY**

## A Rights-based Recovery

In 2021 we are better placed than any generation before us to understand what individual freedom - liberty - looks like. And yet, while many of us have greater freedom than ever before, our liberty is under threat.

From our politics, our economy, and crime and justice, too many people are excluded, see their freedom being chipped away, and do not benefit from the progress we make.

Covid-19 has revealed and is exacerbating deep-rooted inequalities. Where you live, where you were born, your identity, your education all shape your access to opportunities, whether you live in poverty, whether you live in fear, your health outcomes, employment and so much more.

We can recount the scenes and news stories of the last year where women, people of colour, those in poverty, disabled people, and LGBTQ+ people faced glaring inequality. Enough is enough. The Welsh Liberal Democrats will act to create a more equal Wales where everyone can thrive.

Much of the decision making that causes us to be less free, less able to thrive, rests with Westminster, but that won't stop us fighting to create a more generous, more liberal society where all of us can thrive and flourish.

We will use every power at our disposal to deliver changes - and will lobby for increased powers at every opportunity so that decisions that affect Wales can be made right here in Wales.

Our liberal ideals can create a safer, fairer, happier country.

### **We will:**

- 1. Pursue the devolution of criminal justice to Wales so that we can better prevent crime, support the victims of crime, and help people move forward with their lives.**
- 2. Establish a Commission to investigate what services in Wales can do to prevent violence against women and girls and to support victims of abuse.**
- 3. Take action against hate crime and race inequality in Wales through measures dealing with workplace inequality, access to services, and data monitoring.**

## **Crime and policing**

People should be able to go about their lives without fear of discrimination. However, hate crimes are on the rise and too many people no longer feel safe. We believe that the government needs to take an active role both in punishing discrimination and ensuring that it does not happen in the first place.

Whilst many of the levers of change rest with Westminster, there is much that the Welsh Government and partners can do to tackle crime, injustice, discrimination, and improve the experiences of those who come into contact with the criminal justice system.

Ten years ago the Silk Commission, secured by the Welsh Liberal Democrats, recommended the devolution of policing to Wales. Action on this is long overdue. We believe that powers over youth justice, probation services, prisons and policing should be devolved to allow Wales to create an effective, liberal, community-based approach to policing and tackling crime. We will work with the UK Government to devolve these powers.

We will do as much as we can within our existing powers. We want to be equals in a federal nation allowing us to create distinctive crime and policing policies that realise long-held liberal values.

### **We will:**

- Establish a Commission into violence against women and girls to understand what services can do in Wales.
- Resist draconian and dangerous attempts to subject marginalised communities to even more disproportionate policing and to curb our right to protest.
- Work with elected Police and Crime Commissioners to drive forward harm reduction policy, including the creation of legal drug consumption rooms to take dangerous drugs off our streets.

## **Race equality**

In Wales, Black, Asian and minority ethnic people are overrepresented at every stage of the criminal justice system: as victims of crime, in stop-and-searches, within the prison population and among people on probation.

We recognise that there are significant structural issues that we need to address. Over half of British-born Black, Asian and minority ethnic people believe that the criminal justice system discriminates against particular groups, but only around a third of British-born white people think the same.

We believe that the police, Crown Prosecution Service, the judiciary and HM Prison and Probation Service should publish a strategy on Black, Asian and minority ethnic people in Wales and report annually to the Senedd on tackling race inequality in Wales. The Lammy Review must also be implemented in full.

**We will:**

- Work with the UK Government to extend the ‘explain or reform’ principle into devolved competencies that play a role in racial disparities in the criminal justice system: this would mean that where criminal justice agencies cannot provide an evidence based explanation for disparities between ethnic groups, they are compelled to introduce reforms.
- Improve ethnicity data recording and monitoring factors known to be associated with offending behaviour, such as school exclusions, to identify structural inequality and bias that drives negative outcomes for people of colour.

## **Violence against women and girls**

In March this year, the reality of the violence faced by women and girls came to the fore.

The events of early March have highlighted the fear that so many women feel when they are using public spaces. We heard so many stories of street harassment. We have also seen a significant rise in domestic abuse during the pandemic. We need to look at what government at all levels can do to prevent violence against women.

Services for women and girls facing violence and domestic abuse are under increasing pressure due to funding cuts, which have had a disproportionate impact on specialist services for Black, Asian and minority ethnic women and girls.

**We will:**

- Establish a commission to determine what education, justice, and council services can do to create a safer, fairer society for women and girls.
- Safeguard funding for specialist services for victims of violence to adequately meet anticipated demand during and after the pandemic.
- Deliver the full recommendations in the Gender Equality review to achieve a fundamental shift in policy, budgeting, procurement and commissioning.

- Ensure the regular reporting of sexual harassment and hate crimes motivated by misogyny and ensure that Police and Crime Commissioners act upon them.
- Ensure that the duty on public services to Ask and Act in relation to violence against women and girls is used and embedded across our communities, including the private sector such as hotels and night clubs.

## **Hate crime**

The number of hate crimes recorded by police in Wales has increased substantially over the past seven years, reaching 2,634 offences in 2019/20 – double the number in 2012/13. The majority of offences in 2019/20 were race hate crimes, which means that Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups as well as minority faith communities are disproportionately affected. Hate crimes based on sexual orientation and trans identity are on the rise, with hate crimes reported by trans people more than doubling since 2017.

### **We will:**

- Increase funding for services for victims of hate crimes, including those allowing third party reporting, with the aim of expanding current provision and provide those who are reluctant to approach the police with wider options.
- Adopt a multi-agency and holistic strategy to tackle hate crime, including educational interventions.
- Improve data on hate crime prevalence to inform services, funding, and strategies to prevent crimes.

## **Sex work**

The current approach to sex work in the UK is putting vulnerable people at risk. Whilst neither the sale nor purchasing of sex is currently illegal in Wales, activities around it are criminalised, forcing those selling sex to engage in riskier practices to keep working. We believe in an approach that prioritises the protection of sex workers, making the industry safer and reducing harm.

### **We will:**

- Adopt the Merseyside model across police forces treating crimes against sex workers as hate crimes, and working closely with sex work projects that offer services such as harm reduction, counselling, and outreach.

- Make use of Independent Sexual Violence Advisors to acts as intermediaries where sex workers have been victims of crime.
- Provide funding for services to adopt multi-disciplinary and case management approaches to reduce harm.

## **Reducing re-offending**

Our criminal justice system is failing us all.

Our criminal justice system should be supporting rehabilitation: when people leave the prison system they should be ready to reintegrate into society with work and a place to live. Too many people leaving prison or coming into contact with the criminal justice system are marginalised and shut out of housing, work, and opportunities to rebuild their lives.

We have a vision of a justice system that focuses on re-integrating people into society and on preventing re-offending. This is also the best way of protecting people from becoming victims of crime.

### **We will:**

- Drive greater coordination between the prison service, probation service providers, the voluntary and private sectors and local authorities.
- Ensure that all prison-leavers have a suitably timed release around accommodation issues, are supported with a bank account and employment or training, and are registered with a local GP.
- Improve mental health support and treatment within the criminal justice system and ensure continuity of mental health care and addiction treatment.

## **A Public Health approach**

We need to adopt a public health approach to crime: identifying risk factors and treating them, rather than just focusing on the symptoms. This means police, teachers, health professionals, youth workers and social services all working closely together to prevent crime and violence.

Tighter working partnerships between health professionals and police services are likely to improve the care of people who come into contact with police during mental health crises.

**We will:**

- Deprioritise pursuing convictions for drug possession offences and divert resources towards targeting trafficking.
- Embed trauma-informed approaches to policing, justice, and crime for both victims and perpetrators of crime.

**Protecting Privacy and Preventing a Surveillance State**

Our rights and freedoms are under threat. Liberal Democrats believe in a society where rights and liberties are protected. We believe that any attempt to record or share data for the purposes of immigration enforcement prevents people accessing support with devastating consequences.

The Conservatives' new criminal justice legislation is dangerous, draconian, and flawed. It risks stifling dissent, and subjecting marginalised communities to profiling and even more disproportionate policing.

It would see sweeping powers given to the Home Office to restrict the right to protest, giving police new powers to disrupt protests, marches and assemblies, make it easier to criminalise organisers and participants and increase prison sentences for them. In short, it does nothing to help prevent crime and is dangerous to our individual freedoms.

**We will:**

- Work with Police and Crime Commissioners to halt the use of facial recognition surveillance by police forces in Wales until there is greater accountability and transparency around their use.
- Resist draconian and dangerous attempts to subject marginalised communities to even more disproportionate policing.
- Resist attempts to curb our right to protest.
- Work with services to ensure that people feel confident in accessing services without fear of recrimination, particularly around deportation.



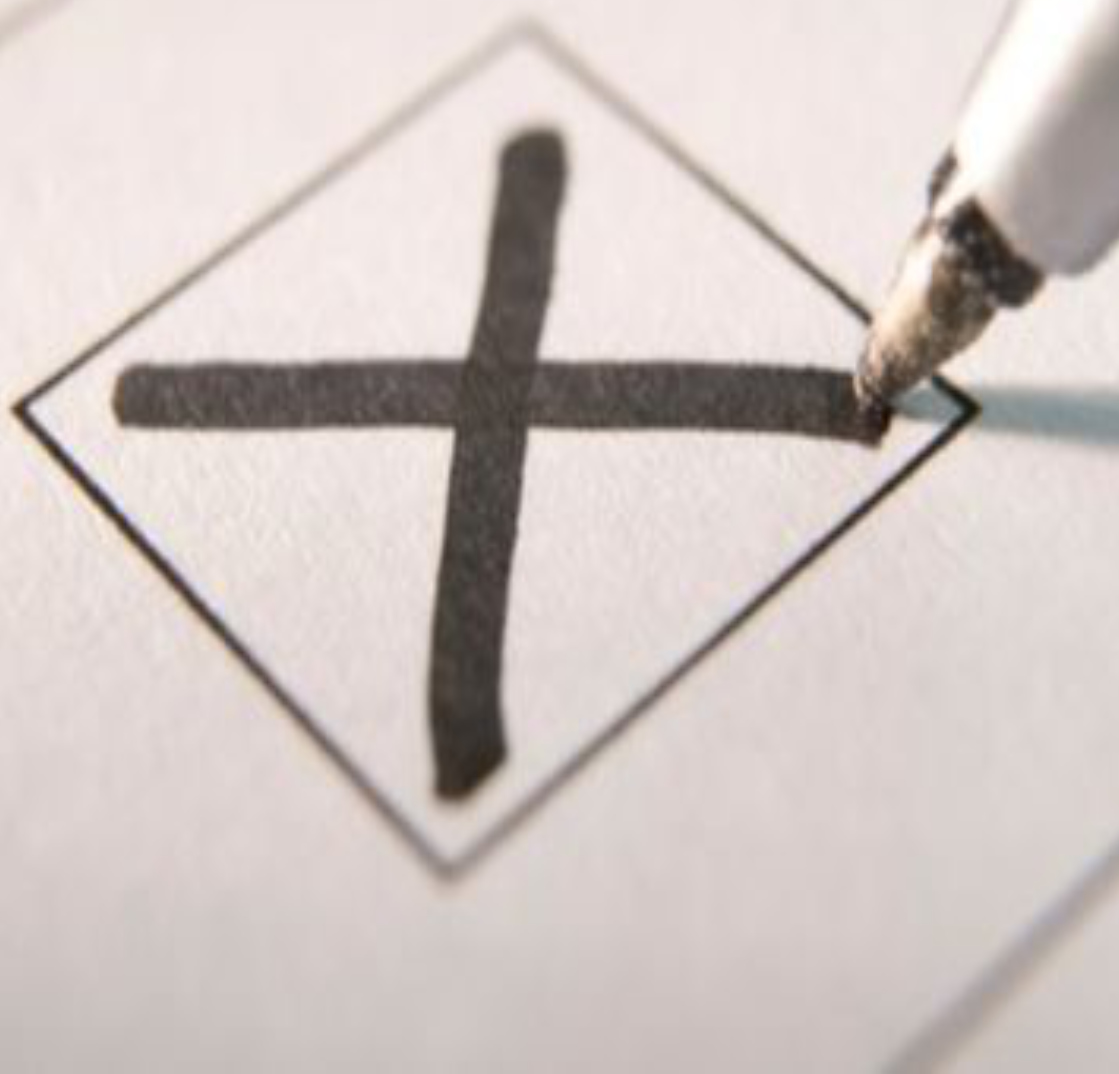
## **Strengthening rights**

- To underpin our proposals, guide decision making, and ensure that everyone can thrive and nobody's rights can be chipped away we will:
- Incorporate UN Conventions, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (UNCRDP), the UN Convention on Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the UN Principles for Older People, into Welsh law.
- Support efforts for full recognition and protection from discrimination for all gender identities under the law and, where possible, within devolved powers, continue to work towards reform of gender recognition certificates, ensuring Welsh services are fully accessible.
- Ensure there is no regression on equality protections following our exit from the EU and take opportunities to improve protections in domestic legislation.
- Put in place a national mechanism for monitoring and reporting on progress on human rights.
- Commit to Welsh legislation maintaining compatibility with the European Convention of Human Rights.

**A**

**DEMOCRATIC**

**RECOVERY**



## **A Democratic Recovery**

Liberal Democrats have always been at the forefront of political reform. We have been arguing for more powers for Wales, fairer voting and lowering the voting age, and we support measures to promote a more open and accountable politics.

Our voting system needs to change, to deliver maximum power to voters, enabling them to support representatives of their choice without fear of wasting their vote, and to get elected members who are genuinely accountable.

More must be done to ensure that our politics and political institutions reflect the diversity of the people and communities of Wales, and that our political leaders have the powers to act in our best interests.

Wales faces the greatest existential threat to its political autonomy since devolution. The Conservative Government in Westminster has undermined Welsh competencies in devolved areas like agriculture and food standards - and it has broken its promise to replace every penny of EU funding through the Shared Prosperity Fund.

We condemn these attempts to undermine the devolution settlement - a settlement that has twice been endorsed by voters in referendums. We will continue to oppose the Conservatives' attempts to roll back devolution and self-government in Wales.

### **We will:**

- 1. Work towards a stronger Wales as part of a federal United Kingdom, with an immediate transfer of fiscal and other powers to the Welsh Government to support our recovery.**
- 2. Work with citizens to shape our approach to challenges through a programme of properly funded Citizens' Assemblies to build confidence and support for measures.**
- 3. Introduce a proportional voting system, for Senedd elections and all local authority elections**

## **A Federal UK**

Liberal Democrats have long argued for a federal United Kingdom. This means far more than devolution; it means that the constituent parts of the UK have power over their own affairs as a matter of enforceable legal right, as part of a wider written constitution for the UK.

Under such a system there could be no question of Westminster rolling back or circumventing the devolution settlement - as the Conservative Government in Westminster is currently trying to do.

Decisions on the future of Wales within a federal UK would be taken in Wales, with the consent of Welsh people, and with an absolute constitutional veto over any change in the relationship between the reformed United Kingdom and its constituent parts.

We are not defending the status quo. We are the only party that believes in reform both in Wales and the United Kingdom as a whole.

The Liberal Democrat vision is therefore one that creates an autonomous Wales, in which decisions are taken by democratic Welsh institutions; it is also one that avoids creating new barriers.

Since leaving the EU, Wales has seen the problems that arise when new borders are created. We believe in taking down borders, not erecting them; a federal UK is how we achieve aspirations for home rule while ensuring that people are able to continue their lives without facing border controls: after all, tens of thousands of people cross the border between England and Wales every day, in both directions, to work and carry on businesses, or just to visit family and friends on the other side of the border.

## **Power to communities**

During the pandemic we have all seen what local councils can do for our communities. They managed crucial services, from the distribution of PPE to deliveries to those who were shielding, coordinating volunteer networks, raising funds for those hit by the pandemic, accommodating more than 7,000 people facing homelessness, distributing grants to businesses, and transforming schools into childcare hubs. We owe our council staff a huge debt.

However, we believe our councils must change to meet future challenges and to ensure that they are accountable for the decisions they take. Many people feel disconnected from democracy and disempowered in their communities. They feel ignored and not listened to. Decisions are made in ways which are not easily understood by the people they represent. In some cases decisions are made by people who represent communities over an hour away from those who are really affected.

Attempts by the Welsh Government to reorganise local government have failed to secure broad support from councils or the public.

We believe that the key principle for local government should be that public services are delivered at the lowest geographical scale at which they can be subject to efficient and competent implementation and effective democratic oversight. Local government areas should be meaningful with which residents readily identify, reflecting geographical and community ties.

We envision a new structure of “Cantrefi” councils through the amalgamation of town and community areas into meaningful and efficient units for public service delivery with greater local accountability and autonomy.

**We will:**

- Instruct the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales to shape plans for local government reorganisation, through the amalgamation of town and community areas into meaningful and accountable bodies.
- Investigate the creation of a small number of larger regional authorities for parts of Wales with shared characteristics (city regions, the valleys, rural mid Wales, North Wales), with responsibility for strategic planning, economic development and transport.
- Investigate changes to the funding of local government, including replacing Council Tax.
- Move all local elections to Single Transferable Vote method, to ensure fair votes in all communities.
- Investigate which frontline functions, services and responsibilities should be redistributed from principal councils to the lowest possible level.
- Invest in new technology, so that the Welsh government can develop high quality IT-based support hubs which would assist smaller councils in making effective decisions.

## **Fiscal devolution**

The Welsh Government’s powers to make economic policy are currently restricted. The Senedd has very limited tax-raising and borrowing powers and is dependent on the financial decisions made in Westminster. The Covid-19 pandemic clearly illustrated this.

Moreover, the failure of the Conservative Government in Westminster to honour its promises to replace EU funding through the Shared Prosperity Fund, and the continued crisis of low investment in Wales, has shown the need for greater fiscal devolution. We need to be able to take the big economic decisions in Wales, in line with the economic priorities set by the Senedd in a way that is accountable to people in Wales.

Liberal Democrats will therefore argue for greater fiscal devolution. We will in the next Senedd press for greater borrowing powers, and for greater freedom and autonomy in allocating spending.

## **Politics that works for Wales and the people of Wales**

Democracy is facing a crisis of trust and legitimacy. People feel left behind, forgotten, ignored. Too many people fail to see themselves represented amongst decision makers.

The balance between government and members of the Senedd free to scrutinise ministers is currently skewed so that those in power cannot be held to account properly. Our Welsh Parliament still doesn't have the tools it needs to meet current expectations of the Welsh people, let alone meet our aspirations for Wales.

We are committed to increasing the number of Members of the Senedd to between 80-90, in line with the recommendations of the McAllister Review. This option should be made cost neutral by the planned reduction in the number of Westminster MPs by the UK Government.

We are committed to improving the diversity of our politics. Whilst progress towards gender balance in the Senedd is laudable, it is fragile. The representation of women in local government trails significantly behind the Senedd and not once in its twenty-year history has a woman of colour been elected to the Senedd. Disabled people are routinely shut out of politics at all levels.

That has to be addressed and we are ready to play our part in tackling that deficit.

### **We will:**

- Introduce a programme of Citizens' Assemblies, tasked with understanding, agreeing, and shaping recommendations and actions to tackle the big issues facing our country in the years ahead. This could include social care funding, the climate emergency, and public spending.

- Increase the number of Members of the Senedd to between 80-90
- Introduce the Single Transferable Vote for all elections in Wales.
- Ensure sufficient funding for programmes which support people not traditionally represented in politics to access public office, including tackling harassment, bullying, and discrimination in public life.

## **Fixing our planning system**

Communities feel increasingly powerless where planning decisions are made in a system which people do not understand and feel powerless to influence.

We will establish changes to planning law to bring together local residents and planners so that we can deliver the new homes we need in a manner in keeping with the identity and priorities of communities. Underpinning this approach will be the principles enshrined in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

By strengthening planning law we will give communities a meaningful voice during the planning process. This will be a radical change from the current dynamic which pits existing residents and developers against one another.

We will adopt the principles of a 20-minute neighbourhood in all planning and decision making, ensuring that wherever you live you are within 20 minutes walk, cycle or public transport of essential services. This includes local shopping areas, health facilities, schools, green spaces and playgrounds, and employment opportunities.

Our proposed changes to planning will also grant the Future Generations Commissioner powers to scrutinise and challenge planning decisions that go against these principles. We will continue to strengthen provisions in law to ensure that planning decisions do not have a detrimental effect on the Welsh language.

More must be done to ensure that local communities benefit immediately from developer investment - ending the all too common situation where local authorities and communities miss out on funding for roads, parks, and infrastructure despite initial agreements or promises.

**We will:**

- Pass a new Planning Act for Wales to revolutionize the planning system, ensuring a fairer more transparent system for residents and developers.
- Give the Future Generations Commissioner powers and resources to scrutinise and challenge planning decisions.
- Update and improve tree protection legislation as part of a new Welsh Planning Act
- Replace Section 106 agreements with a Development Levy
- Adopt the principle of 20 minute neighbourhoods ion planning.
- Establish a centrally-funded Migrant Impact Fund to help local communities to adjust to new migration and meet unexpected pressures on public services and housing.
- Address challenges with holiday homes, second homes, and properties used for short-term holiday lets and strengthen language planning as part of planning legislation.



## **Annex 1:**

### **Legislative and Regulatory Priorities for the Sixth Senedd**

Good legislation, clarity of direction, and supportive government is essential in delivering excellence for the people of Wales. We do not underestimate the challenge of responding to the current climate and progressing with new legislation. We will explore a range of options to pursue the issues and priorities we identify in this manifesto.

#### **A Recovery for our Communities**

- Housing Act
- Duties on public bodies to prevent homelessness
- Measures on Second Homes and holiday lets
- Community Empowerment Act

#### **A Recovery for our Planet**

- Green Homes Act
- Nature Act
- Clean Air Act
- Wildlife Act for Wales
- Tree and Woodland Strategy for every local authority in Wales

#### **A Caring Recovery**

- Healthcare Rights Act
- Amendment to Nursing Staffing Levels Act
- Freedom to Speak Up Guardians in the NHS
- Introduction of Health Impact Assessments in procurement, commissioning, and planning.
- Extension of the Welsh Language Measure 2011 to include Health Education and Improvement Wales
- Legal duty to provide NHS clinical care through the medium of Welsh

- Moratorium on private for-profit contracts in specific areas of the care system, including children's residential care and learning disability secure units
- Define a statutory function for youth work through legislation
- Social Care Commissioning Act, encompassing:
  - Implementing wide-ranging changes to commissioning, giving more power to local commissioners, and to people themselves to source their own services.
  - Introduce necessary legislation to enable creation of a National Care Service

### **A Recovery in Education**

- Elective Home Education
- Welsh Language for All
- Right to Lifelong Learning
- Tertiary Education and Research Commission for Wales
- Amendment to travel regulations for home to school transport
- Education workforce mental health charter

### **A Recovery for our Economy**

- Economic Development Act
- Bus Act
- People's Procurement Act
- Welsh Planning Act
- Community Right to Buy

### **A Rights based recovery**

- Extend the duty to Ask and Act beyond the public sector in relation to Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales).
- Introduction of Race Equality Impact Assessments as part of public sector procurement processes
- Implementation of the Gender Equality Review

- A Bill of Rights to incorporate UN Conventions into Welsh Law, including: A Right to Adequate Housing, the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (UNCPRD), the UN Convention on Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the UN Principles for Older People, into Welsh law.

## **A Democratic Recovery**

- Mandate proportional representation in all elections across Wales
- Various legislative options will be considered to push the envelope of the devolution settlement, including but not limited to:
  - Pursue devolution of criminal justice
  - Pursue radical harm reduction policies
  - Refuse legislative consent whenever applicable, to the rollback of British rights to protest and organise
  - Pursue fiscal devolution

## Annex 2: Costings annex

Welsh Liberal Democrats are committed to producing costed manifestos. This has never been as important as it is in the current economic climate, both in demonstrating responsibility and confidence, but in providing some degree of certainty of our direction of travel in the years ahead.

**We will initiate a full spending review at the conclusion of the pandemic period to guide the recovery in public services and the economy.**

The spending review, in particular, will align the capital programme with our climate change priorities, not least ending fuel poverty. We will continue current principles of fair work, prudent borrowing, and continual efficiency within government.

We will use resources provided by the increase in NHS funding and the principles of the foundational economy to underpin our commitments to higher pay and fair work conditions for social care staff.

Our programme for government will include a pipeline of projects ready to be started as the pandemic eases and more money becomes available for the recovery. These will be prioritised according to those which generate greatest economic and social benefit.

**We have provided estimated costings for the priorities we outline in this manifesto, based on a range of publicly available data. The figures below illustrate the cost of implementing each proposal from day one.**

In doing so we make a number of assumptions and predictions based on current and previous Welsh Government budgets. We do so with significant uncertainty about overall levels of public spending and tax revenues in future years as a result of the pandemic and Brexit. We make several assumptions, namely that day to day spending of the UK Government will increase as planned over the course of this current Parliament, with consequential spending for Wales.

We also assume that health spending will fall on 2021/2022 levels, but will fall no lower than approximately £7bn, reflecting the trend of increasing health spending in recent years. This is important in the context of our commitments to increase overall levels of spending on mental health and General Practice.

It is also important to note that, whilst not provided in our manifesto, we know that many of our proposals have positive implications for our economy. For example, we know that there are significant positive economic implications for increased spend on childcare, retrofitting of homes, housebuilding, and business support in terms of individual economic activity, poverty alleviation, direct economic stimulus, and a reduced pressure on public services in the medium to long-term. Some of these examples are provided elsewhere in this document.

**£1bn per annum spend on the climate emergency:** This represents a package of funding across public and private sector sources. This could include a mixture of reshaping and re-aligning existing funding as well as new funding to help unlock and leverage private sector funding. We believe that setting out long-term infrastructure plans through the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales and our Economic Development Bill will provide long-term certainty for investors, developers, contractors and others to invest. Our figures are based on those published by the Future Generations Commissioner's 10 Point Plan to fund Wales' climate emergency.

Figures in £000s and include both revenue and capital commitments

Policy	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total term
<b>A Caring Recovery</b>						
Annual increase in mental health spending to reach a target share of the NHS budget for mental health of 13% by 2028	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£25,000	£25,000	£140,000
Investment in mental health support for NHS workforce	£7,000	£7,000	£7,000	£7,000	£7,000	£35,000
Additional funds to deliver a Real Living Wage for social care staff	£13,000	£13,000	£13,000	£13,000	£13,000	£65,000
Investing in GPs, delivering better access and a single patient health record	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£25,000	£25,000	£140,000
<b>A Recovery in Education</b>						
Continuing Free School Meal provision over school holidays after 2022 and expanding Food and Fun programmes	£28,000	£28,000	£28,000	£28,000	£28,000	£140,000
Ending digital exclusion in statutory education	£40,000	£1,300	£1,300	£1,300	£1,300	£45,200
Pilot to end digital exclusion in further and higher education	£10,000	-	-	-	-	
Funding our schools to deliver the new ALNET and Curriculum and Assessment Framework	£120,000	£120,000	£120,000	£120,000	£120,000	£600,000
Community Focused Schools	£3,500	£3,500	£3,500	£3,500	£3,500	£17,500
Personal Learning Accounts	£12,000	£12,000	£12,000	£12,000	£12,000	£60,000
<b>A Recovery for our Economy</b>						
Freeze business rates for the next 5 years	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£50,000
Business Investment Relief Fund	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000	£25,000	£25,000	£155,000
Welsh Towns Fund	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£500,000
Childcare	£95,000	£95,000	£95,000	£95,000	£95,000	£475,000
Purchasing of bad debt	£50	£50	£50	£25	£25	£200
<b>A Recovery for our Communities</b>						
Housing Support Grant	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£25,000
Greener homes retrofit	£350,000	£350,000	£350,000	£350,000	£350,000	£1,750,000
Free bus travel for 16-24 year olds	£7,000	£7,000	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000	£38,000
Active Travel	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000	£300,000
Keep Wales Creative	£10,000	£10,000	£5,000	-	-	£25,000
Keep Wales Active	£2,000	£2,000	£1,000	£500	£500	£6,000
<b>A Welsh Recovery</b>						
Welsh medium workforce planning (education and care)	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£50,000
<b>A Democratic Recovery</b>						
Citizen's Assemblies	£250	£250	£250	£250	£250	£1,250





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Printed by Spectrum Printing, Unit B3, South Point, Foreshore Road, Cardiff, CF10 4SP.

Published and promoted by Claire Halliwell on behalf of the Welsh Liberal Democrats at  
15th Floor, Brunel House, 2 Fitzalan Road, Cardiff, CF24 0EB.